A Profile of Service-Learning in Iowa

A Statewide Survey of Public Schools

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Service-learning is a method of teaching and learning which engages students in solving problems and addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of their total educational program.

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Author:
Mari Kemis
Research Institute for
Studies in Education
E005 Lagomarcino Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

Contact:
Joseph Herrity
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-3290

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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Introduction

Service-learning supports school-based activities that get youth involved in their communities. Young people get involved in service as a means of not only helping others, but also of enriching their academic learning experience, fostering personal growth, and developing the skills needed to become productive citizens. Service-learning goes beyond aiding those in need. It emphasizes the educational value of experience-based learning and thoughtful reflection on the service activity. Service-learning allows students to apply personal experience to academic knowledge.

What service-learning does:

- Identifies and researches local needs or issues
- Combines academic curriculum with service
- Invites collaboration with school and community-based organizations
- Motivates students to make a difference in their communities
- Encourages students to think about and address real-life situations
- Develops responsible citizens
- Fosters a sense of caring for others

Through service-learning, the doors of communication open between students, teachers, and administrators. They all work together to set goals, designate responsibilities, and create a strategic plan. Within the realm of service-learning, the students create programs that interest them and help others. The teachers then act as facilitators of the ideas generated by the students. Administrators continue the communication process by interacting with the students on a one-on-one basis. This communication and interaction creates an environment

within the school that is caring, positive, and beneficial to everyone involved. Stronger, more understanding relationships are formed between students and teachers. Administrators and community leaders see youngsters doing things that benefit society.

Why Service-Learning is Important

■ Service-learning offers certain advantages over the traditional classroom where the teacher is the primary source of information to be imparted to the passive student recipient.

■ When service-learning is an integral part of the school curriculum and philosophy, the student assumes greater responsibility in defining the educational experience, and has a greater opportunity to appreciate education as an evolving process.

■ As co-inquirers, students are encouraged to develop and test their skills of critical inquiry in applied settings.

■ Service-learning connects students to a defined community for purposes of achieving a common goal and thereby can contribute to their affective, civic, and social development.

ASLER Standards

The ASLER Standards have served as a benchmark for Iowa's service-learning initiatives.

1. Effective service-learning efforts strengthen service and academic learning.

2. Model service-learning provides concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills, to think critically, and to test new roles in an environment which encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.

3. Preparation and reflection are essential elements in service-learning.

4. Students' efforts are recognized by their peers and the community they serve.

5. Youth are involved in the planning.

6. The service students perform makes a meaningful contribution to the community.

7. Effective service-learning integrates systematic formative and summative evaluation.

8. Service-learning connects school and its community in new and positive ways.

9. Service-learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of a school and its community.

10. Skilled adult guidance and supervision is essential to the success of service-learning.

11. Pre-service and staff development which includes the philosophy and methodology of service-learning, best ensure that program quality and continuity are maintained.

"ASLER Standards, The Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, May 1993.

As a part of a federal program titled, Learn and Serve America: School-Based Programs, service-learning began in 1993. At that time, the Iowa Department of Education began working toward achieving the following results in Iowa:

- increasing the opportunity for teachers to be trained, both in their teacher preparation programs and during their professional careers;

- increasing the number of local school district models involved in service-learning;

- including the opportunity for students to contribute to their schools and communities in a responsible way;

- stimulating the development of a service-learning curriculum;

- creating opportunities for community-based organizations and other nonprofit organizations to be involved in service-learning efforts undertaken by their local school districts.

Community service, youth service, and service-learning for students are gaining recognition nationally, and Iowa has been instrumental in the development of service-learning. In the 1994-95 school year, Iowa ranked third in the nation in the number of students involved in school-based service-learning programs, with more than 50,000 Iowa students involved (Source: American Youth Policy Forum). Since then, Iowa has continued to make progress toward establishing meaningful service-programs throughout the state. The 1997-2000 goals established for Iowa include:

- connecting the academic curriculum with service-learning and provide a meaningful context for learning;

- developing pilot projects throughout the state that can be replicated at other sites;

- building a statewide network of service-learning programs, activities, information, and opportunities for youth service;

- increasing the quality and availability of opportunities for youth to serve others.

Methodology

The Iowa Department of Education Service-Learning survey was developed by the Iowa Service Learning Partners (ISLP) and conducted for the Iowa Department of Education by Iowa State University's Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE). The purpose of the survey was to assess the status of service-learning within Iowa's public school districts in developing service-learning programs.

The survey instrument was mailed to curriculum directors or coordinators in each of Iowa's 375 school districts, covering public pre-kindergarten through senior high schools. The surveys were completed by curriculum directors, directors of instruction, superintendents, principals, counselors, school-to-work coordinators, and service-learning coordinators in 239 school districts, for a final return rate of 64%. In addition, follow-up phone calls were made to several school districts to clarify responses or ask for additional information on selected questions.

For purposes of this survey, community service, service-learning, and community education are defined as follows:

■ **Community service** is defined as any voluntary student activities that meet important community needs.

■ **Service-learning** is the integration of community or school-based service activities with academic skills and content, and involves students reflecting on and learning from their service experiences as well as making valuable contributions to their community.

■ **Community education** is the concept of providing opportunities for local community members, schools, and other organizations to become partners in addressing educational and community issues through lifelong learning, community involvement, and efficient use of resources.

A Profile of Service-Learning in Iowa

This profile of service-learning in Iowa is based on the results of a statewide study of Iowa school districts and consists of information about reported numbers of students and teachers in Iowa school districts and the number of teachers who have implemented service-learning in their classrooms. Also included is information about the 118 Iowa school districts that reported having service-learning programs, and those that have districtwide service-learning coordinators and mission statements, goals, and policies that encourage service-learning. Districts reported on what is essential to start and sustain service-learning programs, as well as the challenges for developing a program. Finally, the profile examines how service-learning is integrated into other districtwide initiatives, the resources districts used and plan to use in the future to support service-learning, and what funding sources were used to support service-learning activities and programs.

Students and Teachers in Iowa School Districts

The school districts were asked to report the number of teachers and students in each of five grade levels, as well as the number of teachers implementing service-learning in their classroom curricula. Table 1 provides a description of the average number of teachers and students in each of the PreK, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 levels.

Table 1. Students and Teachers in Iowa's Schools

Level	Average # of Students	Average # of Teachers	% of Iowa Teachers*	Average # of Teachers* in Districts with Service-Learning
PreK	30	2	7.4%	1
K-2	282	15	8.7%	5
3-5	295	16	11.2%	5
6-8	313	20	11.5%	5
9-12	436	35	10.0%	7

* % of Teachers and Average # of Teachers who are implementing service-learning in their classroom.

At the PreK level, school districts across the state averaged 30 students and two teachers. For K-2, they reported an average of 282 students and 15 teachers. At the 3-5 level, districts reported similar numbers, an average of 295 students and 16 teachers. In grades 6-8, an average of 313 students and 20 teachers were recorded. Finally for the high school (9-12) level, districts reported an average of 436 students and 35 teachers.

The percentage of Iowa teachers who implemented service-learning in their classrooms ranged from 7% at the PreK level to over 11% at the upper elementary and middle school levels (Table 1). Districts with service-learning programs reported that an average of one teacher at the PreK level, an average of five teachers each in the lower elementary, upper elementary, and middle grades, and an average of seven high school teachers implemented service-learning activities in the classroom.

In the districts with service-learning programs, approximately one-third of the elementary teachers are involved in service-learning activities. At the middle school and high school levels, the proportion of teachers decreases to one in four and one in five, respectively, while the number of teachers involved overall increases. This has more to do with class size and building structure than interest in service-learning and curriculum that integrates service-learning activities.

Service-Learning Programs in Iowa School Districts

School districts in Iowa are making commitments to implement service-learning programs in various grades in their schools or throughout the district as a whole. They reported that they implemented service-learning programs most often throughout the K-12 grades, but may focus more predominately at the middle and high school levels, or just in grades nine through 12.

In 1993, a study sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education found that approximately one-fourth of Iowa school districts had what they considered a community service or service-learning program. In 1999, almost half (49%) of the districts responding to the survey

reported that they offered service-learning programs during the 1998-99 school year, implementing a program in at least one grade level within the district. This represents a significant increase over the six-year period in the number of Iowa districts with service-learning programs and is higher than the national average of 32%[1].

One hundred eighteen districts were identified as having service-learning programs. For this study, having a service-learning program was defined as service-learning being implemented in at least one grade level within the district. According to the survey, service-learning programs have been in existence for an average of three years at the PreK level, four years in the K-2 level, three years at grades 3 through 5, four years at the middle level, and five years at the high school level (Table 2). Thirty-three districts reported having a districtwide service-learning program.

Table 2. Years Service-Learning Programs Have Been in Existence in 118 Iowa Districts

Level	Number of Districts	Average Years	Standard Deviation	Range of Years
PreK	12	3.17	1.61	1-6
K-2	44	4.05	3.29	1-20
3-5	63	3.49	2.02	1-10
6-8	90	4.16	2.99	1-20
9-12	89	5.05	5.87	1-50

Districtwide Coordinators

Fourteen percent of the districts responding reported having a districtwide service-learning program, while one of three districts indicated having a districtwide community education program. (See Appendix Table 1.) Approximately 40% of the districts reported districtwide student mentoring programs and character development/education programs.

[1] Thirty-two percent of all public schools organized service-learning as part of their curriculum, including nearly half of all high schools. Source: Skinner, R. & Chapman, C. (September, 1999). Service Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools. Center for Education Statistics: Washington, D.C.

Districtwide Coordinators

When compared to districts without a service-learning program, those with service-learning programs are more likely to have district-wide programs in service-learning, community education, and character development (Figure 1). Approximately 37% each of districts with or without service-learning programs had districtwide student mentoring programs.

Figure 1. Percent of Districts with Districtwide Programs
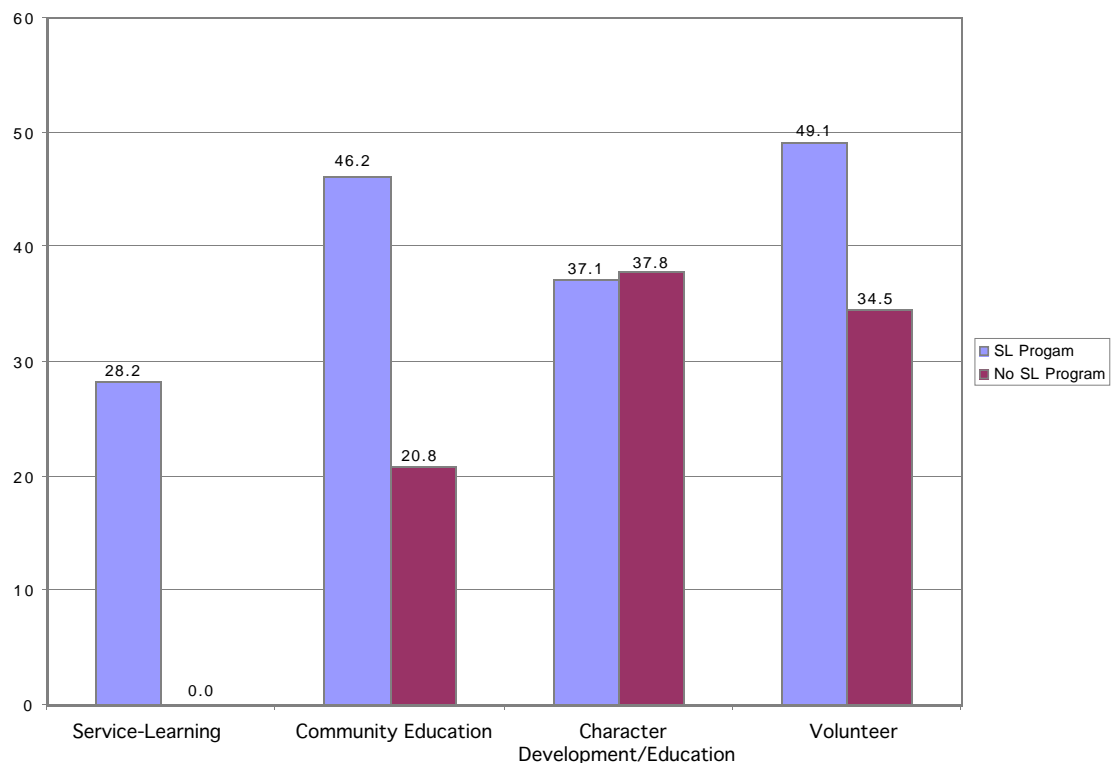
Not surprisingly, districts with service-learning programs were more likely to have coordinators for service-learning, community education, character development, and mentoring programs in place as well (Figure 2). Almost one in four of the districts with a service-learning program say they have a district service-learning coordinator, while four districts without programs reported having a coordinator for service-learning activities. Fewer than one in seven districts overall reported that they have a districtwide service-learning coordinator (Appendix Table 2).

Further, one in six districts overall has a volunteer coordinator and one in ten has a character development/education coordinator; similar percentages are found whether the district has a service-learning program or not. While over 20% have a community education coordinator for the district, these numbers vary when comparing districts with and without service-learning programs. Thirty-one percent of districts with programs have community education coordinators, while less than half that number of districts (13%) without service-learning programs have them.

Figure 2. Percent of Districts with Districtwide Coordinators
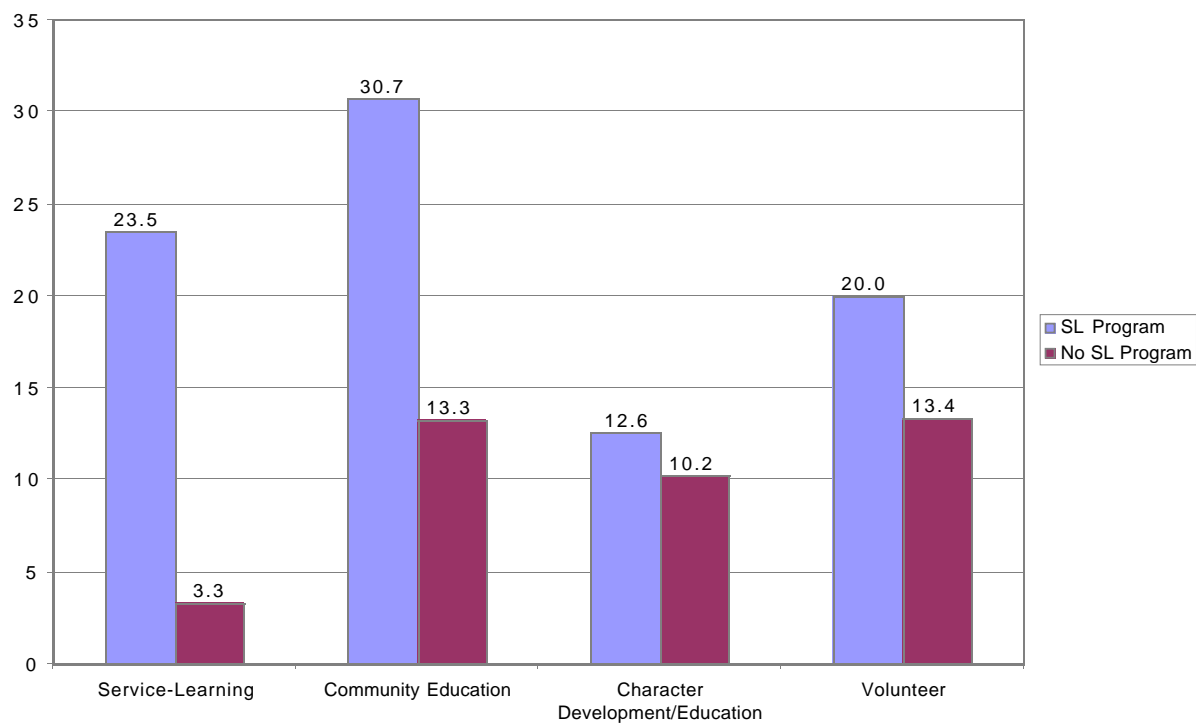
Planning for Service-Learning

For those 121 districts that have not implemented a service-learning program, 24% said they were currently in the planning stages and one district indicated that their service-learning program would be fully implemented within the next three years (Figure 3 and Appendix Table 3). Thirty-eight percent of these districts had no interest in starting a program. An additional 37% of the districts without districtwide service-learning programs mentioned various reasons for not implementing a program, including that they are interested but still are gathering information and studying models, that other district initiatives are taking priority at this time, and that they need support in terms of staff, time, and money.

Only one in four districts currently supporting service-learning activities indicated that they are not interested in starting a districtwide program, while 41% reported that they are currently in the planning stages. One district with a service-learning program indicated that this program would be fully implemented within the next three years. An additional 33% of districts with service-learning programs noted similar reasons for not implementing a districtwide program at this time.

Figure 3. District Plans for Implementing Service-Learning Programs

With SL Programs

No SL Programs

- Currently in Planning Stages
- Fully Implemented within the Next Three Years
- No Interest in Starting a Program
- Other
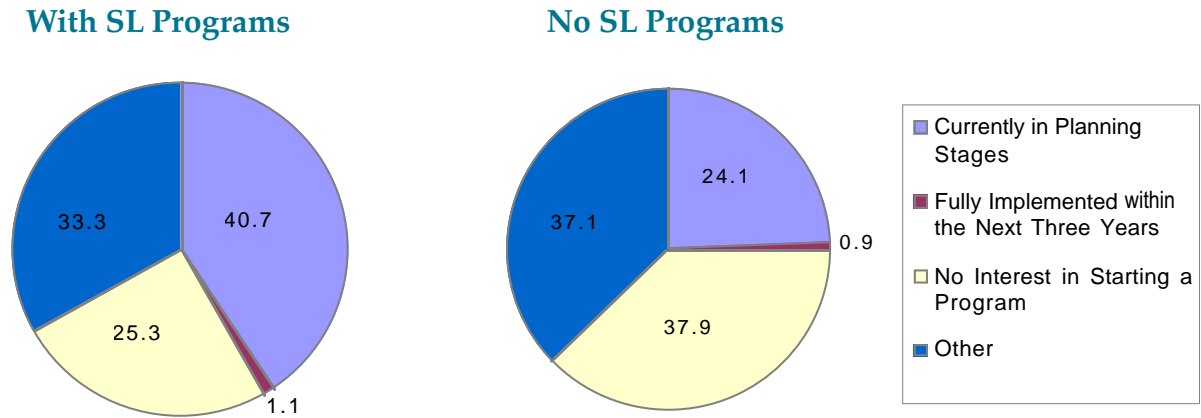
Most of the districts (75%) indicated that they are interested in learning more about integrating service-learning into the curriculum, and in particular, 84% of districts with service-learning programs (Figure 4 and Appendix Table 4). Further, 62% overall say they would be more likely to hire a teacher who has had training in service-learning among equally qualified candidates (Figure 5). This includes 70% of the districts with service-learning programs and 55% of those that do not have programs. These responses are similar to those in the 1993 study and continue to indicate the value of incorporating service-learning within teacher preparation courses at the university level.

These responses continue to indicate the value of incorporating service-learning within teacher preparation courses at the university level.

Figure 4. Percentage of Districts Interested in Learning About Integrating Service-Learning into the Curriculum
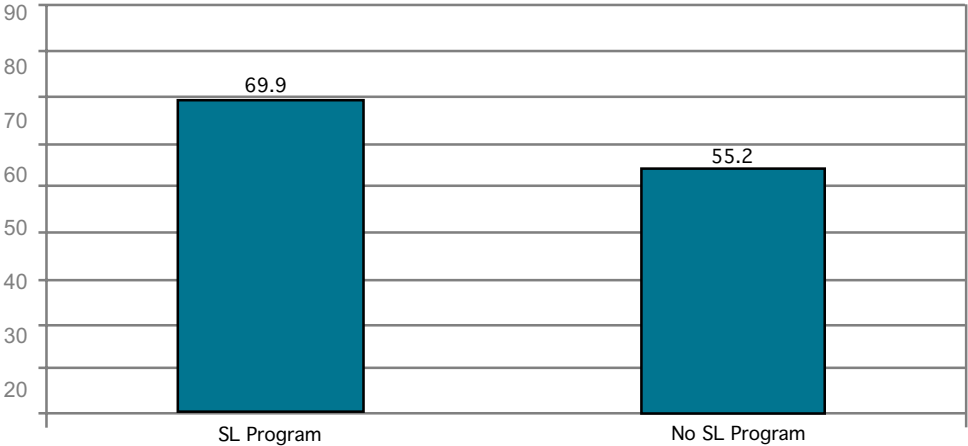
Figure 5. Percentage of Districts Who Would be More Likely to Hire a Teacher with Training in Service-Learning
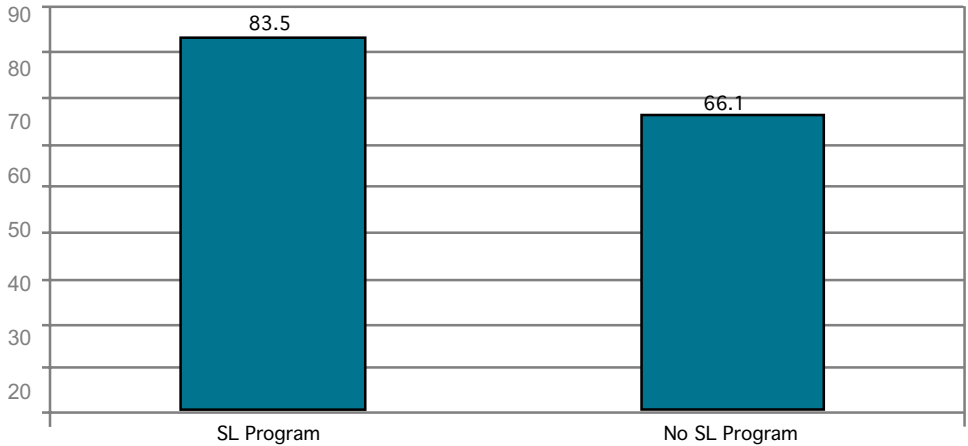
Policies for Service-Learning

According to the districts that responded, service-learning is becoming a formal part of district policy for almost half (48%) of the districts which reported having written mission statements, goals, or policies that encourage service learning (Figure 6 and Appendix Table 5). As expected, this was true of more districts that have service-learning programs (57%) than of districts without programs (40%). Many of these policies encourage service-learning as a component in a wide variety of curriculum initiatives within these districts.

Figure 6. Percent of Districts with Written Mission Statements, Goals, or Policies that Encourage Service-Learning
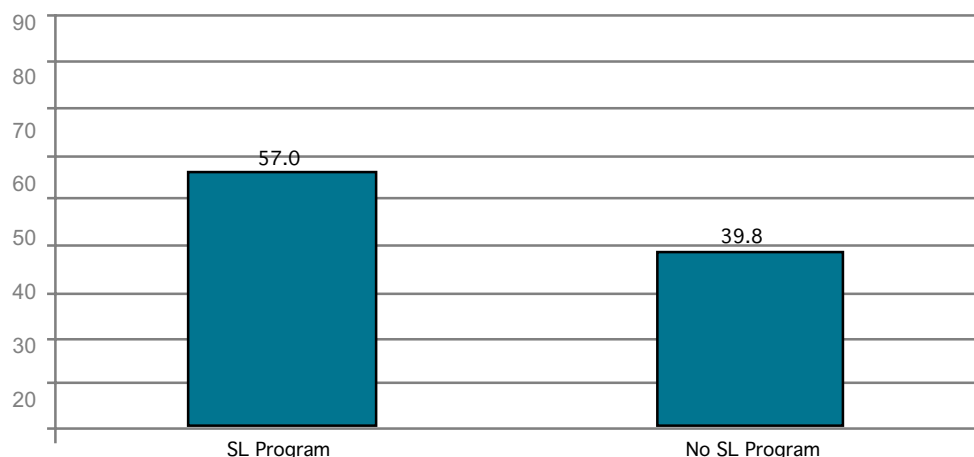
At this time, only 3% of the districts have board policy that includes service-learning as a graduation requirement (Appendix Table 6). Clearly this is a minority practice in Iowa, with the decision to make service-learning a requirement for graduation left to individual school districts. Nevertheless, school districts increasingly are using alternative practices to integrate service-learning experiences for students.

Of the seven districts responding that they had service-learning as a graduation requirement, five gave credit for service-learning projects, four provided evidence of service-learning on transcripts, and three noted service-learning on the diploma. One district mentioned that service-learning was recognized and encouraged, although not formally indicated on transcripts or diplomas.

District examples of approaches used to implement service-learning requirements

Graduation requirements call for 20 hours of service over four years. Students receive one credit, which shows on their transcripts as part of their student portfolio. Their service-learning project must be approved by a teacher and support course benchmarks. Following their service-learning activities, students write a reflection of their experiences.

~Glenwood Community School District

The service-learning program at Sibley-Ocheyedan allows students to receive job experience. They receive three credits for working half days in either the spring or fall semester. Transcripts include their service-learning credits.

~Sibley-Ocheyedan Community School District

More districts in Iowa indicated that they required community service for graduation than required service-learning experiences (Appendix Table 6). Five percent of the districts reported having policies that include community service as a graduation requirement. Two of these 11 districts indicated that students receive recognition at graduation, honored either with a special certificate or with a seal on the diploma. Districts with community service requirements widely varied in the number of hours of necessary community service. Requirements ranged from 8 to 60 hours, with an average of 24 hours. Community service was used as disciplinary measure in 68 districts responding (29% of the districts).

New and Established Service-Learning Programs

Of the 118 Iowa districts with service-learning programs, 59 districts have had service-learning programs three years or less, while 59 have had programs for more than three years. Districts with new or established programs had definite opinions about starting and sustaining service-learning programs, as well as the challenges for developing service-learning programs. They also indicated which resources have been used to support training for service-learning and which will be needed in the future, and which funding sources have been used to support service-learning programs and activities.

118 School Districts in Iowa Have Service-Learning Programs

59--New Service-Learning Programs (3 years or less)

59--Established Service-Learning Programs (more than 3 years)

Service-learning, taken as an elective during the student's junior or senior year, requires 64 hours of service. They write a plan (Prepare), carry it out (Action), reflect on their experiences (Reflection), and complete a written report for the committee and board (Report). As part of the reporting step, many students submit an article describing their service-learning experiences to the newspaper.

~Wapello Community School District

Many of the districts that responded noted that implementing a service-learning program requires time and resources, study to learn about it, and staff development before implementing it. The survey addressed the components essential to starting a service-learning program, the components essential to sustaining a program, and the challenges for developing a program (Appendix Tables 7 through 9).

Regardless of whether a service-learning program is in the beginning stages or has been around for some years, teacher interest and administrative support were seen as essential in starting a service-learning program (Figure 7). Although the order of the rankings by the three groups varied, time, information on other service-learning programs, funding, student interest, and community interest were also seen as essential when starting a program. Districts with service-learning programs saw other components such as school board interest, teacher in-service sessions, using model programs as a guide, having a service-learning coordinator, service-learning as a student graduation requirement, adoption of a schoolwide project, parent interest, or searching for new employees who have service-learning training as less essential when starting a program (Appendix Table 7).

Figure 7. What is *Essential to Starting* a Service-Learning Program?

	New Program Ranking	Established Program Ranking	No Program Ranking
Teacher interest	1	1	1
Administrative support	2	2	2
Time	3	7	4
Information on other service-learning programs	4	5	6
Funding	5	4	7
Student interest	6	3	7
Community interest	7	5	3
School board interest	8	9	5

There were some interesting differences in order of ranking by group. Time and having information on other service-learning programs were ranked high (3rd and 4th) by districts with newer programs, while districts with established programs believed student interest and funding were essential when starting a program. Districts that didn't have a service-learning program also ranked teacher interest and administrative support as essential to starting a program. However, their rankings showed that they would place a higher importance on community interest in starting a service-learning program.

According to all three groups, sustaining a service-learning program requires a different focus than starting one (Figure 8). *A service-learning coordinator and funding are the two components most often cited as essential to sustaining a program*. Twenty-seven districts reported having a district-wide service-learning coordinator. It is interesting to note that despite the top ranking for a coordinator in sustaining a service-learning program, only 12 of the established programs reported having a coordinator. Fifteen new service-learning programs have coordinators.

A service-learning coordinator and funding are the two components most often cited as essential to sustaining a program.

Figure 8. What is *Essential to Sustaining* a Service-Learning Program?

	New Program Ranking	Established Program Ranking	No Program Ranking
A service-learning coordinator	1	1	1
Funding	2	2	1
Employees with service-learning experiences/training	4	3	8
Community involvement/support	5	4	4
Student interest	3	5	3
In-service training opportunities	6	8	6
Curriculum development	7	6	7
Student graduation requirement	8	7	5

Other necessary components included extensive local input, such as community involvement and support, student interest, employees with service-learning experiences and training, curriculum development, in-service training opportunities, and a student graduation requirement. Of the six programs that have service-learning as a graduation requirement, five are in districts with established service-learning programs (Appendix Table 8).

Components that were ranked as less essential for sustaining a program were using model programs, an already developed schoolwide project, networking with other practitioners, student performance assessment, research and literature, teacher evaluation and portfolios, and use of outside training and speakers.

*All districts agreed that the **challenges for developing** a service-learning program were time, resources (financial or other), teacher interest, having a developed curriculum and trained personnel, and student interest* (Figure 9). Community interest and support, administrative interest, and school board interest and policy were of lesser importance (Appendix Table 9).

All districts agreed that the *challenges for developing* a service-learning program were time, resources (financial or other), teacher interest, having a developed curriculum and trained personnel, and student interest .

Figure 9. What are the *Challenges for Developing* a Service-Learning Program?

	New Program Ranking	Established Program Ranking	No Program Ranking
Time	1	1	1
Resources	2	2	2
Teacher interest	3	3	3
Developed curriculum	4	4	4
Trained personnel	5	6	5
Student interest	6	5	6

District Initiatives Integrating Service-Learning

Since service-learning can be applied to many areas, it is often integrated into other district initiatives depending on interest areas and priorities in local schools. Over three-fourths of the districts answered a question related to their current district initiatives that include service-learning.

Service-learning has been integrated into many other districtwide initiatives, including the following programs: school-to-work (44% of the districts), school improvement (39%), character education (38%), gifted and talented (37%), safe and drug free schools (36%), vocational education (36%), at-risk (35%), guidance (34%), and mentoring programs (33%) (Figure 10 and Appendix Table 10). Additionally, it has been integrated into other programs—exceptional education, *Success4*, community education, early childhood, brain research applications, Title I programs, multiple intelligence, and ESL—but at a lesser rate.

Figure 10. District Initiatives that Include Service-Learning in Iowa Schools

School-to-Work	44.2%
School Improvement	38.7%
Character Education	38.1%
Gifted and Talented	37.0%
Safe and Drug Free Schools	36.5%
Vocational Education	36.5%
At-Risk	34.8%
Guidance	34.3%
Mentoring	32.6%

On average, these 181 responding districts have integrated service-learning into four other programs, with a range of one to 15 programs (Figure 11 and Appendix Table 11). Newer service-learning programs are integrating it into an average of four other programs, while established programs are integrating it into five, taking advantage of the most outside programs to promote service-learning. The smallest and largest districts are integrating it into fewer other programs than are districts of 250 to 7500 students.

Figure 11. Average Number of Initiatives for All Respondents, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District
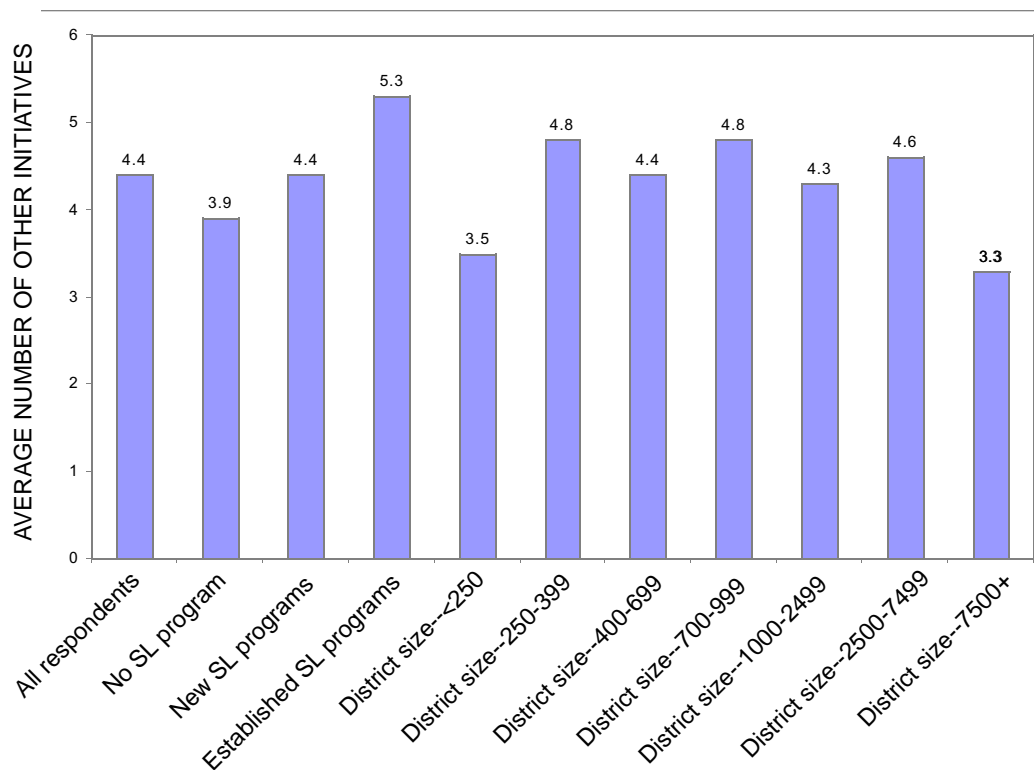
Support for Service-Learning Training, Information, and Assistance

Training has been mentioned as an essential component to sustaining a service-learning program, as well as a factor that districts consider as they look toward establishing service-learning programs at their schools. Within the past five years, responding districts have used a variety of resources for training purposes (Figure 12 and Appendix Table 12). Primarily, they have used local resources, such as local school personnel (54%), other district resources (49%), and AEA consultants (40%), for information and assistance. They have also used the state conference (31%) and other model programs (25%) as resources. Other available resources used included State Department of Education personnel, outside service-learning consultants and trainers, the ICN, web-based information and training, college and university personnel, and national clearinghouses.

Figure 12. Top Five Resources Used Within the Past Five Years for Service-Learning

Own district personnel	54.3%
Local district	49.4%
Local AEA consultants	40.1%
State conference	30.9%
Other model programs	25.3%

Districts are taking advantage of the resources available, using an average of about three different resources related to service-learning in the past five years, with new service-learning programs seeking more information and assistance than established programs (Figure 13 and Appendix Table 13). Smaller districts tended to use fewer resources than did larger districts.

Figure 13. Average Number of Resources Used in the Last Five Years for All Respondents, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District
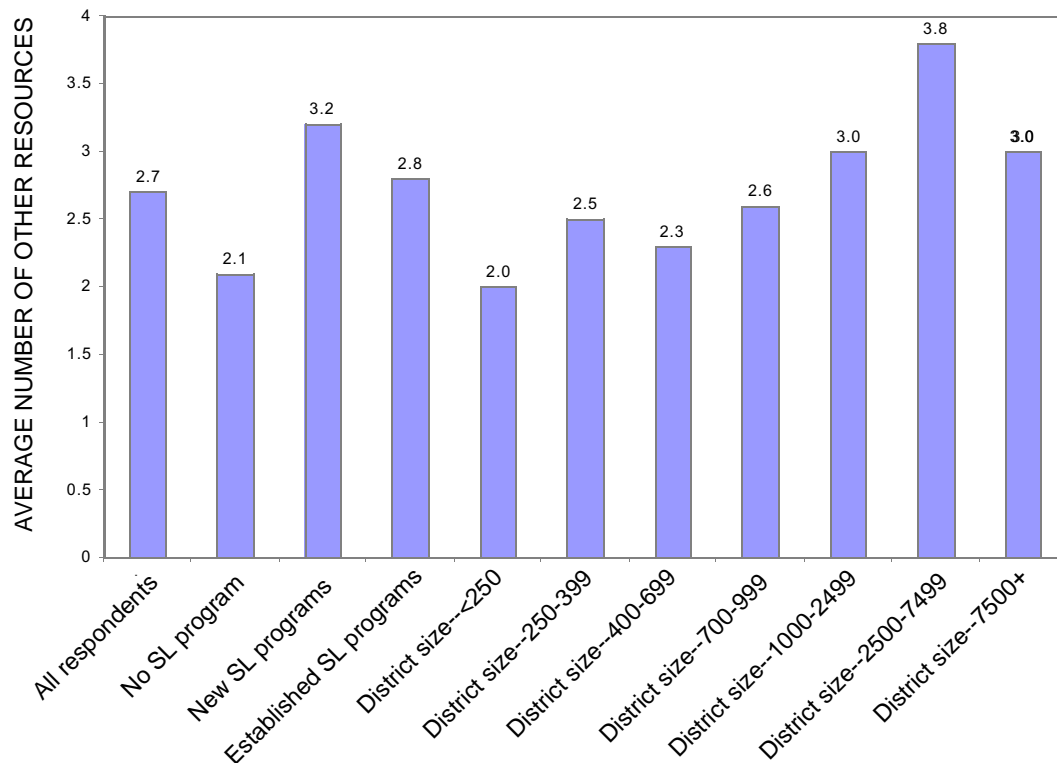
In contrast to the past five years, districts will be looking outside of their local areas for assistance in the future (Figure 14 and Appendix Table 14). They plan to seek information and assistance from other model programs (63%), AEA consultants (48%), outside service-learning consultants and trainers (38%), and web-based information and training (36%). They mentioned the ICN as a source for bringing these together, particularly to see model programs, attend classes and training sessions, and for meetings. While still important resources, districts will place a lesser importance on the use of personnel and resources from local schools, the State Department of Education, and colleges and universities; the state conference; and national clearinghouses.

Figure 14. Top Five Resources Districts are Interested in Using in the Future

Other model programs	63.2%
Local AEA consultants	48.3%
Outside service-learning consultants / trainers	38.2%
ICN	37.3%
Web-based information / training	35.8%

Because of past experiences, districts are familiar with a wide variety of resources related to service-learning and will be looking to use even more in the upcoming years (Figure 15 and Appendix Table 15). In particular, districts with established service-learning programs and schools in the largest districts plan to seek out several more sources of information and assistance than in the past.

Figure 15. Average Number of Future Resources for All Respondents, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District
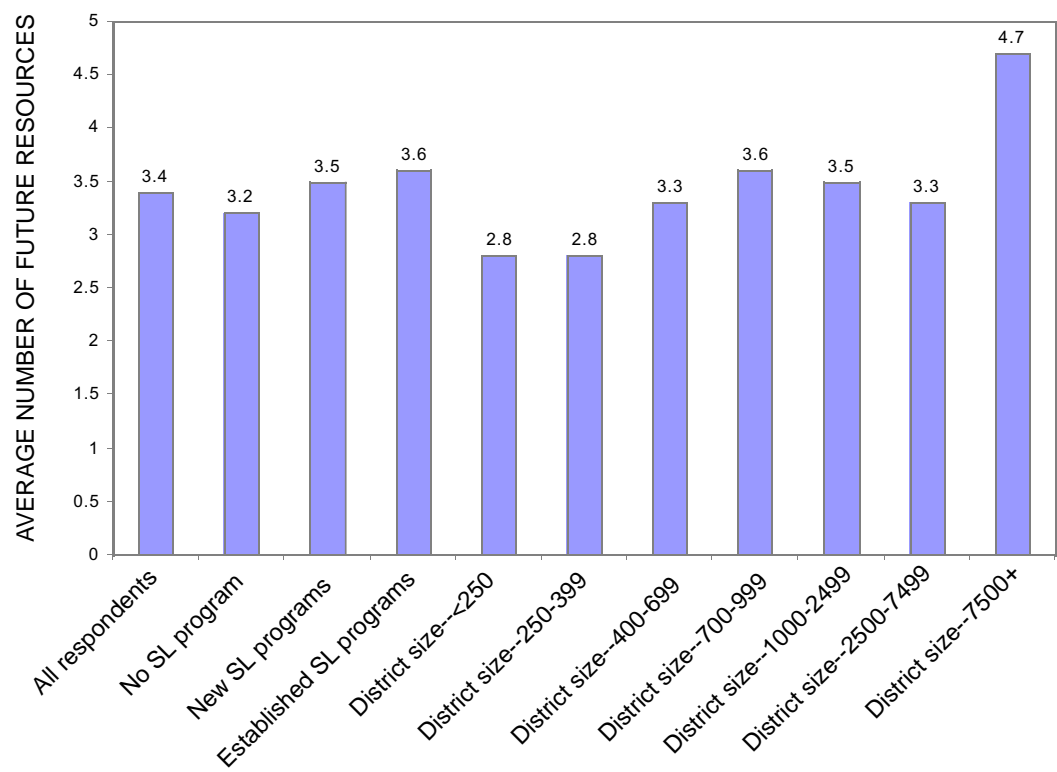
Funding to Support Service-Learning

As with the integration of service-learning into other district initiatives, districts are using multiple funding sources to support service-learning activities and programs (Figure 16 and Appendix Table 16), rather than being dependent on single-source funding. Over 60% of districts responding indicated that funding for service-learning came from general funds. One in four districts are funding service-learning through school-to-work funds (28%), community contributions (26%), teacher pocket (26%), and ComServ Iowa grants (25%). Other funding sources include funds designated for at-risk, Phase III, instructional support levy, or Title I, as well contributions from families or individuals and other sources.

Figure 16. Funding Sources that Support Service-Learning in Iowa Schools

General fund	63.4%
School-to-work funds	28.0%
Community contribution	26.2%
Teacher pocket	25.6%
ComServ Iowa Grant	25.0%

The high percentage of teacher-provided funds shows that teachers think service-learning is important.

The high percentage of teacher-provided funds shows that teachers think service-learning is important. They appeared to be willing to support service-learning activities at program start-up, with over 25% of the districts with new programs reporting direct teacher contribution to support service-learning activities. Teachers continued their support as service-learning programs become more established, with 27% of districts with established programs reporting funds from teacher pocket.

ComServ Iowa grants are a key source of funding for Iowa service-learning programs, funding service-learning in part for approximately 25% of the districts responding to the survey. ComServ Iowa, a federally-funded grant program created in 1993, is designed to provide funds for local school districts and work with community-based organizations interested in developing or expanding community service-learning opportunities for teachers, administrators, and

students. During fiscal year 1999, 38 local school districts (of 61 applicants) were awarded grants through this competitive program. Through these grants, over 25,000 students in grades K-12 learned about providing service to their school or community.

Less than half of the districts responding to this survey (43%) were aware of the ComServ Iowa Grant Program (Appendix Table 17). Twenty-two percent of the respondents have applied for a grant at one time, and 21% have received grants through this program.

Typically, districts are combining various sources of funding to support service-learning programs (Figure 17 and Appendix Table 18). Most districts use an average of two to three funding sources, with some using up to ten different sources. Established service-learning programs use more funding sources on average to support their programs.

Figure 17. Average Number of Funding Sources for All Respondents, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District
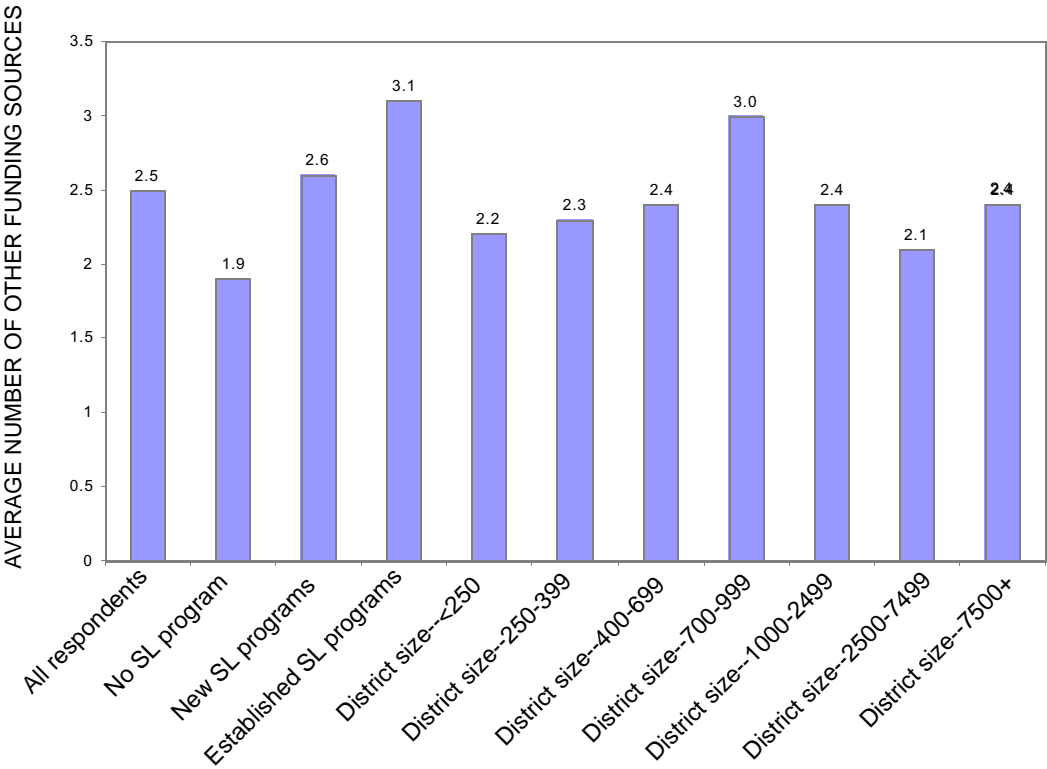
Only four of 41 districts with ComServ Iowa grants are supporting their service-learning activities solely with grant funds (Figure 18). The other grant recipients are combining it with other district funds, primarily with general funds, community contributions, and funds from the teachers themselves. Some districts are committing funds from up to nine other sources, in addition to their ComServ Iowa grant, to support service-learning.

Figure 18. District Funding Sources Supplementing 41 ComServ Iowa Grants
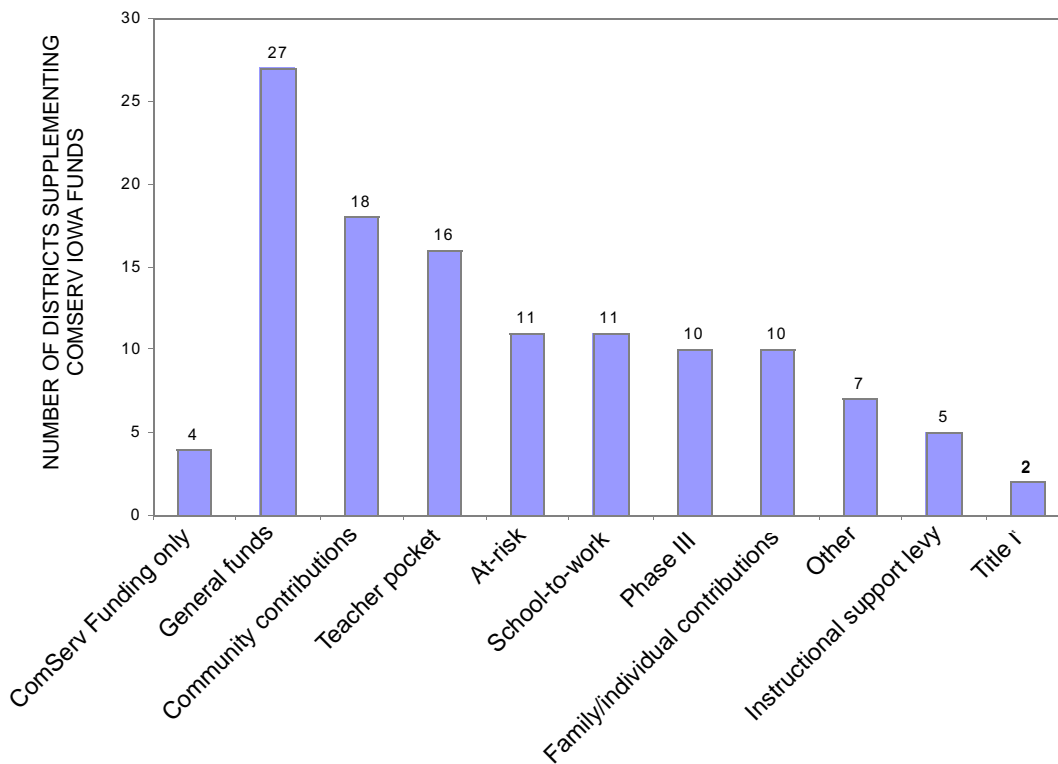
How Can Legislative Action Support Service-Learning?

Respondents also had the opportunity to indicate what legislative action would support additional or further service-learning activities in school districts (Figure 19 and Appendix Table 18). Of those who responded to the question, over 70% endorsed funding to implement programs. There was no distinction between federal and state funds to implement programs.

Figure 19. Legislative Actions that Support Service-Learning Activities

Funding to implement a program	70.3%
Statewide resource center for service-learning agencies and programs	41.0%
Service-learning graduation requirement	30.5%
Teacher preparation training in service-learning	24.7%
Other	4.6%

In addition to the resources that districts were using to support service-learning activities and programs, some respondents recommended legislative action to enhance the available resources for training, information, and assistance. Approximately 40% believed that the establishment of a statewide resource center for service-learning agencies and programs would be beneficial, while about one-fourth wanted mandated teacher preparation training in service-learning.

Further integration into the curriculum was suggested as a key legislative action. About one-third of the respondents supported a legislated graduation requirement for service-learning.

Summary

Several key findings resulted from this survey of Iowa's school districts. The profile suggests that Iowa schools are making a commitment to service learning, that starting and sustaining effective service-learning programs require different emphases, that schools are integrating service-learning into their curricula in many ways, and that they are using a wide variety of innovative sources to fund and support service-learning.

Commitment to Service-Learning in Iowa Schools

One hundred eighteen (118) school districts in Iowa have made commitments to implement service-learning programs in various grades in their schools or throughout the district as a whole. Of the 239 school districts responding, almost half of the districts reported that they offered service-learning programs during the 1998-99 school year, implementing a program in at least one grade level within the district. They reported that they implemented service-learning programs most often throughout the K-12 grades, at the middle and high school levels, or in grades nine through 12.

Thirty-three districts reported districtwide programs and one in seven districts overall reported that having a districtwide service-learning coordinator. Most districts are interested in implementing a service-learning program and many are currently in the planning stage.

Other examples of Iowa's commitment to service-learning included:

- Most of the districts (75% overall and 84% of districts with service-learning programs) indicated that they are interested in learning more about integrating service-learning into the curriculum.

- Two-thirds of the districts say they would be more likely to hire a teacher who has had training in service-learning among equally qualified candidates, indicating the value of incorporating service-learning within teacher preparation courses at the university level.

- According to the districts responding, service-learning is becoming a formal part of district policy for almost half of the districts, which reported having written mission statements, goals, or policies that encourage service learning. At this time, 3% of the districts have board policy that includes service-learning as a graduation requirement.

Starting and Sustaining a Service-Learning Program

Of the 118 Iowa districts with service-learning programs, 59 districts have had service-learning programs three years or less, while 59 have supported programs for more than three years. These programs had definite opinions on what it takes to start and sustain a service-learning program.

Regardless of whether a service-learning program is in the beginning stages or has been around for some years, districts say that teacher interest and administrative support are essential to starting a program. Sustaining a service-learning program requires a different focus than starting one. A service-learning coordinator and funding are the two components most often cited as essential to sustaining a program. All districts agreed that the challenges for developing a service-learning program were time, resources (financial or other), teacher interest, having a developed curriculum and trained personnel, and student interest.

Top two essential components for:

■ **Starting a program**
- Teacher interest
- Administrative support

■ **Sustaining a program**
- Service-learning coordinator
- Funding

■ **Challenges for developing a program**
- Time
- Resources

Integrating Service-Learning into the Curriculum

The results of the survey clearly indicate that service-learning can be integrated successfully into multiple curriculum initiatives, depending on interest areas and priorities in local schools. Typically service-learning activities were included in four other districtwide programs, with some districts incorporating service-learning in up to 15 other district programs, such as school-to-work, school improvement, character education, gifted and talented, safe and drug-free schools, vocational education, at-risk, guidance, and mentoring programs.

While few districts had board policy that included service-learning as a graduation requirement, many districts were examining alternatives for recognizing the value of service-learning to their students. Although not a majority, there was also support for a state-legislated graduation requirement by one-third of the respondents. Issues of local control in Iowa schools allowing districts the flexibility to determine implementation of a graduation requirement would need to be carefully considered and resolved.

Support for Service-Learning Training, Information, and Assistance

Within the past five years, responding districts have used a variety of resources for training purposes. Primarily, they have used local resources, such as local school personnel, other district resources, and AEA consultants for information and assistance. In contrast to the past five years, districts will be looking outside of their local areas for assistance in the future. They plan to seek information and assistance from other model programs, AEA consultants, and outside service-learning consultants and trainers, as well as use the ICN and web-based information and training. They are taking advantage of combinations of resources available.

Three key issues relate directly to the resources that support service-learning. First, the high interest districts have in learning more about integrating service-learning into the curriculum has direct implications for assistance, training, and information. Many additional districts are currently planning districtwide programs or will fully implement new programs in the next three years. Who will provide the needed assistance and how will that assistance be provided to a growing number of school districts as they develop new service-learning programs and expand their existing ones? Second, the requests for assistance by AEA consultants are likely to increase as schools take advantage of the support outside of their own districts, requiring increased knowledge and capacity for working with service-learning programs that are starting and those that are established, as well as for coordinating and disseminating information about other available resources. Third, universities must recognize the importance of incorporating service-learning opportunities and coursework when preparing teachers so that new teachers are ready to incorporate service-learning activities in their classrooms and lead programs in their schools. While colleges and universities are not necessarily seen as advisors to service-learning at this time, with added attention to teacher preparation, they may well become known as and sought out as expert consultants in the future.

Funding to Support Service-Learning

Similar to the integrated approach service-learning has taken into a wide variety of curricular areas, districts are using various funding sources to support service-learning activities and programs. Most districts tap general funds for service-learning programs and also use school-to-work funds, community contributions, teacher pocket, and ComServ Iowa grants. Other funding sources include funds designated for at-risk, Phase III, instructional support levy, or Title I, as well contributions from families or individuals and other sources. Typically, districts are combining various sources of funding to support service-learning, using an average of two to three funding sources, with some using up to ten different sources. Established service-learning programs use more funding sources on average than do new ones to support their programs.

Despite the creativity of districts in financially supporting their service-learning programs, limited funding continues to be a problem for Iowa schools. Although there has been growth in the numbers of districts across the state that have implemented service-learning programs over the past six years and the results of this survey indicate continued planning by districts for new programs, a further expansion of service-learning program capabilities will remain limited at this time because external funds such as those provided through the ComServ Iowa Grant program are constant. As more districts become aware of funding opportunities for service-learning, competition for these finite monies increases and an even smaller percentage of districts will receive funds. Until more federal or state funds are available, there will be a restricted number of school districts that can be a part of the process to develop or expand service-learning programs in Iowa. Respondents to the survey offered one solution to this problem by strongly endorsing legislative action for funding to implement service-learning programs in Iowa.

Districts are using various funding sources to support service-learning activities and programs.

Limited funding for service-learning continues to be a problem for Iowa schools. As more districts become aware of funding opportunities for service-learning, competition for these finite monies increases and an even smaller percentage of districts will receive funds.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Percentage of Districts with Districtwide Programs

Does your school district have a districtwide...	Yes	No	Do Not Know	Number Responding	No Response
Service learning program	13.9%	84.9%	1.3%	238	1
Has service-learning program	28.2%	70.9%	0.9%	117	1
No service-learning program	0.0%	98.3%	1.7%	121	0
Community education program	33.3%	63.6%	3.0%	237	2
Has service-learning program	46.2%	51.3%	2.6%	117	1
No service-learning program	20.8%	75.8%	3.3%	120	1
Student mentoring program	37.4%	61.7%	0.9%	235	4
Has service-learning program	37.1%	62.9%	0.0%	116	2
No service-learning program	37.8%	60.5%	1.7%	119	2
Character development/education program	41.9%	55.5%	2.5%	236	3
Has service-learning program	49.1%	48.7%	1.7%	117	1
No service-learning program	34.5%	62.2%	3.4%	119	2

Appendix Table 2. Percentage of Districts with Districtwide Coordinators

Does your school district have a districtwide...	Yes	No	Number Responding	No Response
Service-learning coordinator	13.2%	86.8%	235	4
Has service-learning program	23.5%	76.5%	115	3
No service-learning program	3.3%	96.7%	120	1
Volunteer coordinator	16.7%	83.3%	234	5
Has service-learning program	20.0%	80.0%	115	3
No service-learning program	13.4%	86.6%	119	2
Character-development/education coordinator	11.4%	88.6%	229	10
Has service-learning program	12.6%	87.4%	111	7
No service-learning program	10.2%	89.8%	118	3
Community education coordinator	21.8%	78.2%	234	5
Has service-learning program	30.7%	69.3%	114	4
No service-learning program	13.3%	86.7%	120	1

Appendix Table 3. District Plans for Implementing Service-Learning Programs

	No Interest in Starting a Program	Currently in the Planning Stages	Fully Implemented Within the Next Three Years	Other	Number Responding	No Response
If you have not implemented a districtwide service-learning program, do you have a timetable to do so?	32.4%	31.4%	1.0%	35.3%	207	32
Has service-learning program	25.3%	40.7%	1.1%	33.0%	91	27
No service-learning program	37.9%	24.1%	0.9%	37.1%	116	5

Other items mentioned: applied for grant-denied: at secondary level (2); being a shared district, we want to, but financial lack is a big problem; building principals are gathering data for study; currently in awareness stage; discussion stage (6); district is very involved with curriculum development with standards at this time; done building by building; gathering; has been by department or instructor with no time table for full participation; hasn't been discussed (4); have researched it, unsure how to implement; haven't begun yet, just hitting the start line; high school and elementary have coordinated a "cadet" mentoring through elementary principal and high school family and consumer sciences teacher; in the process of determining responsibility; individual with different schools; interest at several elementary centers; interest, but no plans currently; interested, but need support and time; investigating a program (2); lack of staff and resources; looking into it (2); more information needed-especially what other schools are doing; needed to do more investigating; no one to do it; no request of direction for such a program from either the superintendent or the board; not at this time (2); not on our three-year plan; our focus has been and will continue to be to focus on developing curricu-lum based assessments which are valid, until we complete this, we don't plan any other districtwide projects; ours is not an "organized" program, but individuals are doing well with it; participated in service-learning for three to four years when we received ComServ grant; possibly included in our *Success4* Grant; possibly looking at models; somewhere between one and two; start discussion topic: time and resources for someone to do it; was uprooted with whole grade sharing; we have a service-learning program K-5; we have a variety of "pockets" within our district involved in service-learning; we have an interest, but have not reached the planning stage; we have bits and pieces and keep adding more; we have components of service-learning into curriculum; we have not studied this and would need staff development before implementing; we have one; we have service-learning in the elementary and middle school; we may in the future but right now with Standard Benchworks-STW-reading emphases have almost more than we can handle; what we do is not referred to as service-learning; interested but currently implementing too many projects; with new personnel for 99-00 will investigate; would like information on projects; would like to see something in years ahead

Appendix Table 4. District Interest in Learning More about Integrating Service-Learning and Likelihood of Hiring Teachers with Training in Service-Learning

	Yes	No	Number Responding	No Response
Are you interested in learning more about integrating service-learning into the curriculum?	74.7%	25.3%	233	6
Has service-learning program	83.5%	16.5%	115	3
No service-learning program	66.1%	33.9%	118	3
Among equally qualified candidates, would your district be more likely to hire a teacher who has had training in service-learning?	62.0%	38.0%	229	10
Has service-learning program	69.9%	30.1%	113	5
No service-learning program	55.2%	44.8%	116	5

Appendix Table 5. Percentage of Districts with Written Mission Statements, Goals, or Policies that Encourage Service-Learning

	Yes	No	Number Responding	No Response
Does your district have a written mission statement, goals, or policy that encourages service-learning?	48.3%	51.7%	232	7
Has service-learning program	57.0%	43.0%	114	4
No service-learning program	39.8%	60.2%	118	3

Appendix Table 6. District Policy and Graduation Requirements Related to Service-Learning and Community Service

	Yes	No	Number Responding	No Response
Does the School Board have a policy that includes service-learning as a graduation requirement?	3.0%	97.0%	237	2
Has service-learning program	5.1%	94.9%	117	1
No service-learning program	0.8%	99.2%	120	1
Does the School Board have a policy that includes community service as a graduation requirement?	4.7%	95.3%	235	4
Has service-learning program	6.9%	93.1%	116	2
No service-learning program	2.5%	97.5%	119	2
Is community service used as a disciplinary measure in your district?	29.4%	70.6%	231	8
Has service-learning program	33.0%	67.0%	115	3
No service-learning program	25.9%	74.1%	116	5

Appendix Table 7. Components Essential to *Starting* a Service-Learning Program

Rank	Component	Valid N	Sum* of Rankings	Has Service-Learning Program	New Service-Learning Program	Established Service-Learning Program	No Service-Learning Program
1	Teacher interest	133	291	178	84	94	113
2	Administrative support	80	150	78	41	37	72
3	Time	59	134	66	43	23	68
4	Community interest	62	123	51	21	30	72
5	Information on other service-learning programs	54	115	57	27	30	58
6	Funding	52	111	57	26	31	54
7	Student interest	58	109	55	23	32	54
8	School board interest	48	92	29	19	10	63
9	Teacher in-service training sessions	36	61	31	16	15	30
10	Model program	22	38	14	12	2	24
11	Appointment of a community service or service-learning coordinator	22	37	16	8	8	21
12	Student graduation requirement	15	28	11	5	6	17
13	Adoption of a schoolwide project	9	14	10	6	4	4
14	Other	5	13	3	3	0	10
15	Parent interest	4	7	3	0	3	4
16	Actively searching for new employees who have service-learning training	1	1	1	1	0	0

*Sum=Rank order of 1 given 3 points, 2 given 2 points, 3 given 1 point, then summed

Appendix Table 8. Components Essential to *Sustaining* a Service-Learning Program

Rank	Component	Valid N	Sum* of Rankings	Has Service-Learning Program	New Service-Learning Program	Established Service-Learning Program	No Service-Learning Program
1	A service-learning coordinator	108	258	141	76	65	117
2	Funding	99	223	106	57	49	117
3	Community involvement/support	83	147	76	30	46	71
4	Student interest	74	145	72	29	43	73
5	Employees with service-learning experiences/training	53	105	67	34	33	38
6	Curriculum development	51	90	45	25	20	45
7	In-service training opportunities	51	89	39	26	13	50
8	A student graduation requirement	41	80	22	7	15	58
9	Model program	24	47	21	15	6	26
10	An already developed schoolwide project	16	38	23	15	8	15
11	Other	13	32	19	12	7	13
12	Networking with other practitioners	22	30	15	10	5	15
13	Student performance assessment	11	19	11	4	7	8
14	Research and literature	6	13	5	1	4	8
15	Teacher evaluation/portfolio	5	8	5	0	5	3
16	Outside training/speakers	4	7	2	0	2	5

*Sum=Rank order of 1 given 3 points, 2 given 2 points, 3 given 1 point, then summed

Appendix Table 9. Challenges for *Developing* a Service-Learning Program

Rank	Component	Valid N	Sum* of Rankings	Has Service-Learning Program	New Service-Learning Program	Established Service-Learning Program	No Service-Learning Program
1	Time	164	398	202	96	106	196
2	Resources (financial or other)	129	286	143	75	68	143
3	Teacher interest	101	196	113	56	57	83
4	Developed curriculum	69	122	60	33	27	62
5	Trained personnel	66	100	51	27	24	49
6	Student interest	44	89	45	20	25	44
7	Community interest/support	50	77	34	13	21	43
8	Administrative interest	27	48	26	16	10	22
9	School board interest	17	29	8	5	3	21
10	Other	3	9	0	0	0	0
11	School board policy	5	8	5	0	5	3

*Sum=Rank order of 1 given 3 points, 2 given 2 points, 3 given 1 point, then summed

Appendix Table 10. Iowa School District Initiatives that Include Service-Learning

Initiatives	Frequency of Responses	Number Checking Item
School-to-Work	44.2%	80
School Improvement	38.7%	70
Character Education	38.1%	69
Gifted and Talented	37.0%	67
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	36.5%	66
Vocational Education	36.5%	66
At-Risk	34.8%	63
Guidance	34.3%	62
Mentoring	32.6%	59
Exceptional (Special) Education	19.3%	35
Success4	18.8%	34
Community Education	14.4%	26
Early Childhood	13.8%	25
Brain Research Applications	12.7%	23
Other	12.2%	22
Title I	9.4%	17
Multiple Intelligence	6.1%	11
ESL	4.4%	8

58 did not respond to any items

Other items mentioned: as teachers make connections with the nursing home, individual interest; clubs and organizations; do not know—information not readily available without researching; Family Resource Center; Family and Consumer Sciences classes at high school; informally connect with senior citizens throughout the year; it occurs with individual teachers coordinating their own projects; Kauffman Mini-Society; math mentoring; Middle School Educ.; multi-age groups at elementary level, general education initiatives, high school student council; multi-occupational; National Honor Society (2), Student Council; no service-learning as defined (2); one science class; project based learning; S.A.D.D. and D.A.R.E.; some isolated classes/grades include service-learning as a "stand alone" activity, especially middle school; some of our organizations are doing this; stand-alone service-learning program

Appendix Table 11. Average Number of Initiatives by Total, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District

	N	Average Number of Other Initiatives	Range of Other Initiatives
All respondents	181	4.4	1-15
No SL program	77	3.9	1-14
New SL program	54	4.4	1-12
Established SL program	50	5.3	1-15
District size—<250	11	3.5	1-11
District size—250-399	17	4.8	1-11
District size—400-599	36	4.4	1-15
District size—600-999	50	4.8	1-15
District size—1000-2499	47	4.3	1-15
District size—2500-7499	14	4.6	1-14
District size—7500+	6	3.3	1-8

Appendix Table 12. Resources Used Within Past Five Years to Support Service-Learning

Resources	Frequency of Responses	Number Checking Item
Current school personnel from your own district	54.3%	88
Local district	49.4%	80
Local AEA consultants	40.1%	65
State conference	30.9%	50
Other model programs	25.3%	41
State Department of Education personnel	16.0%	26
Outside service-learning consultants/trainers	12.3%	20
Other	9.9%	16
ICN	9.3%	15
Web-based information/training	9.3%	15
Colleges and/or university personnel	7.4%	12
National Clearinghouses	6.8%	11

77 did not respond to any items

Other items mentioned: community needs, consortium researcher; Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound; information not available, need more local research to access this; National Conference; none (4), NYCL, National Conferences (2), Community Education Center in Flint, MI; other school district; watch Department of Education video; we have not had training (2)

Appendix Table 13. Average Number of Resources Used in the Last Five Years by Total, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District

	N	Average Number of Resources Used	Range of Resources Used
All respondents	162	2.7	1-10
No SL program	55	2.1	1-10
New SL program	54	3.2	1-10
Established SL program	53	2.8	1-10
District size—<250	12	2.0	1-5
District size—250-399	14	2.5	1-6
District size—400-599	32	2.3	1-6
District size—600-999	46	2.6	1-9
District size—1000-2499	41	3.0	1-10
District size—2500-7499	12	3.8	1-9
District size—7500+	5	3.0	1-6

Appendix Table 14. Resources Districts are Interested in Using in the Future

Resources	Frequency of Responses	Number Checking Item
Other model programs	63.2%	122
Local AEA consultants	48.2%	93
Outside service-learning consultants/trainers	38.2%	74
ICN	37.3%	72
Web-based information/training	35.8%	69
Current school personnel from your own district	23.8%	46
State conference	22.8%	44
State Department of Education personnel	21.1%	41
Local district	19.1%	37
Colleges and/or university personnel	13.0%	25
National Clearinghouses	11.4%	22
Other	4.7%	9

46 did not respond to any items

Other items mentioned: money; all; any that push us to the next level; more; websites, connections with School-to-Work; national conference; successful mentors for us; unsure of our interest level "at this time"; we can't afford to add new programs or try for one-shot monies anymore; program needs to be to content standard

Appendix Table 15. Average Number of Future Resources by Total, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District

	N	Average Number of Future Resources	Range of Future Resources
All respondents	193	3.4	1-12
No SL programs	83	3.2	1-10
New SL programs	56	3.5	1-10
Established SL programs	54	3.6	1-12
District size—<250	13	2.8	1-5
District size—250-399	20	2.8	1-7
District size—400-599	39	3.3	1-9
District size—600-999	55	3.6	1-12
District size—1000-2499	46	3.5	1-10
District size—2500-7499	14	3.3	1-10
District size—7500+	6	4.7	2-11

Appendix Table 16. Funding Sources that Support Service-Learning in Iowa Schools

Source of Funds	Frequency of Responses	Number Checking Item
General Fund	63.4%	104
School-to-Work Funds	28.0%	46
Community Contribution (monetary and/or in-kind)	26.2%	43
Teacher Pocket	25.6%	42
ComServ Iowa Grant	25.0%	41
At-Risk Funds	22.0%	36
Phase III Funds	20.7%	34
Other	19.5%	32
Family/Individual (monetary or in-kind)	13.4%	22
Instructional Support Levy	4.9%	8
Title I Funds	1.8%	3

75 did not respond to any items

Other items mentioned: ASTRA Organization and Success 4 (4); Career Grant-I have a grant ready to submit to ComServ next year; club and organizational funds (activity funds); community education; community in-kind; Demo School money; do not have a formal program; FRC funding-DeCat and AEA money; Future Homemakers, National Honor Society, Student Council; has a Carver grant with service-learning component; individual grants; NISDC; none (7); part of TAG program; Safe and Drug Free Schools (3); separate service-learning grant opportunities; service-learning is volunteerism; special education funds (2); student activity money; US West grant; very little money is used in our service-learning; we choose not to participate

Appendix Table 17. District Knowledge of ComServ Iowa Grant Program

	Yes	No	Number Responding	No Response
Is your school district aware of the ComServ Iowa Grant Program for service-learning?	42.6%	57.4%	235	4
Has service-learning program	57.8%	42.2%	116	2
No service-learning program	27.7%	72.3%	119	2
Has your school district ever applied for a ComServ Iowa Grant?	21.6%	78.4%	232	7
Has service-learning program	32.7%	67.3%	113	5
No service-learning program	10.9%	89.1%	119	2
Has your school district ever received a ComServ Iowa Grant?	21.0%	79.0%	233	6
Has service-learning program	33.3%	66.7%	114	4
No service-learning program	9.2%	90.8%	119	2

Appendix Table 18. Average Number of Funding Sources by Total, Type of Service-Learning Program, and Size of District

	N	Average Number of Funding Sources	Range of Funding Sources
All respondents	164	2.5	1-10
No SL program	60	1.9	1-5
New SL programs	57	2.6	1-5
Established SL programs	47	3.1	1-10
District size—<250	13	2.2	1-4
District size—250-399	14	2.3	1-5
District size—400-599	31	2.4	1-10
District size—600-999	41	3.0	1-9
District size—1000-2499	46	2.4	1-7
District size—2500-7499	14	2.1	1-4
District size—7500+	5	2.4	1-5

Appendix Table 19. Legislative Actions that Support Service-Learning Activities

Legislative Actions	Frequency of Responses	Number Checking Item
Provide funding to implement a program	70.3%	168
Establishment of a statewide resource center for service-learning agencies and programs	41.0%	98
Legislate a service-learning graduation requirement	30.5%	73
Mandate teacher preparation training in service-learning	24.7%	59
Other	4.6%	11

33 did not respond to any items

Other items mentioned: don't know enough about it; figure out what to drop if this is going to be added; we don't need new requirements, there is only so much time; funding would need to be ongoing; not a 3-5 year and out grant; leave it alone, we do not agree with the concept as portrayed; network needs of schools, i.e., just starting or time for renewal of existing programs; only if funding is long term and not at the expense of other state initiatives; provide stipend funding to give teacher the time to design integrated units that would incorporate this into their process; something to show the value of service-learning; why would the legislature be involved?

NOTES

A Profile of Service-Learning in Iowa ■

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